

I am a United States Citizen and a legal resident of the State of Oregon. I would like to comment briefly on the upcoming FCC vote scheduled for early June who, in support of the 1996 Telecom Act will seek to augment or change rules regarding media and communication ownership and control. I searched the FCC web page but was unable to locate information specific to the rules or proposals under consideration for Commission vote. If I missed this, I would appreciate it if you could forward me this link.

In the absence of having the specific proposal(s) under consideration I would like to take this opportunity to state my views toward media ownership.

My premise is that the greatest single strength of a democracy is the ability to foster free and open debate for the issues that concern its citizenry. The greater the access that the citizens have, the more likely that critical solutions will surface and broad consensus will develop. I realize that the modern electronic and print mediums have replaced the town halls and public squares used to air public concerns when we were a more rural and agrarian nation. However, the roles of these media remain the same for the vitality of our democracy. I also understand that these media, unlike the public square are (and need to be) profit generating entities in order to remain viable but that does not mean that any business needs to be protected from failure by guaranteeing access to public resources.

It remains my belief that these media should remain open for the broadest base of diverse expression even if this means restricting the percentage that a single parent company can own or control. This may seem at odds with an economic structure based upon free enterprise and capital accumulation but it is not inconsistent with long standing antitrust guidelines that seek to encourage competition by stifling the monopolistic potential of large organizations. In the case of our communication system, the stakes for averting monopoly or oligopoly control are much higher than other industries. By limiting the span of control of any one entity in this market you serve to preserve the access to critical dialogue that remains an underlying strength of our country and you foster competition that is needed to drive operational efficiencies and market diversification that is the core of a sustainable free enterprise system.

By artificially restricting the market share potential of any individual organization the FCC will optimize your long-term strategic goals for Broadband, Competition, Spectrum, and Media while coincidentally strengthening the core of our democracy. To allow unfettered access will undermine all of the FCC Strategic Goals and may produce a chronic threat to our democracy.